AN EPISTLE

To all that's

Young in the Truth,

And

LATELY CONVINCED;

Who walk with, and assemble amongst the People of God called *Quakers*; that they may escape the *Wiles of Satan*, and continue and walk in the *Way of Righteousness*.

WE calling to Remembrance the *Labours*, *Hardships*, and *Inward Travelling Pangs* and *Throws* of the true Gospel-Ministers in the dayes of old, and we knowing the same in our day, in our measures, which the Apostle compared to a *Travelling Woman*, *in bringing forth her Child into the World*, saying, *Of whom I Travel in Birth again, till Christ be formed in you.*

And blessed be the Lord, there are many Witnesses in this our day, not only of Instructers, but of such as through deep Travel have begotten many to God: and these Fathers being once Children themselves, retain in their Fatherly Bowels the sense of the Childish Estate of those who are come inwardly to feel some Renewings in the Spirit of their Minds, by the Gospel-Power, in order to the

Overturning of all their old Buildings, that now like to *Jerusalem* of old, for their Despising and Rejecting the true Prophets, *there was not to be one Stone left upon another.*

The *Old Serpent* perceiving his kingdom to be Shaken by the Operation of that *Divine Light, Grace* and *Power of God* (which will admit of no terms any longer to be made with him, or any Subjection or Compliance in the least to be yielded to him, or to any of his works) Every Plant now being to be pluckt up, that the Heavenly Father hath not planted; yea, the Fig-Tree that bears no Fruit, whereby the Hungry may be relieved, must Wither by the Curse of his Displeasure.

Then this *Crooked Serpent*, that is more Subtil then all the Beasts of the Field, twists & turns himself every way, if possible, to entangle again those that are turning from his *thick Darkness*, to Christ's *Marvellous Light*, that hath shewed them where they have been, with whom they have been conversing, and what they have been doing in the Dark, and what Path they must walk in, if they will arrive at the Land of Rest.

And thus we found Judgment to begin at the House of God, in order to the overthrowing & purging out of all that had defiled, *that our Bodies might become the Temples of the holy Spirit.*

Oh, the many Devices that the Enemy useth, *that True Judgment might not take place!* And when it did take place, how did he transform himself, to make us believe his Suggestions, viz. *That now we had lain long enough in the Furnace, and the Tin & the Dross was all gone, and nothing now was left but pure Gold.* But when we at any time lent an Ear to these his Delusions, we found by Experience, that which he suggested to be *Gold*, was but *Tin* and *Counterfeit Mettle*, and that he lyed unto us, when he said, *We had been long enough*

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in the Refining Fire: Although the Fleshly Part was glad of this Tidings, hoping thereby its Life would have been spared, and that a Birth of its Womb would serve for a Sacrifice; for we found it was not the Male of the Flock, but an *Ishmael* instead of *Isaac*, in which the Lord took *no Delight*.

So that we saw, we must into the Furnance again, and there continue all the appointed time of the Father, *till indeed we were changed into the state of the precious Sons of* Sion, *truly comparable to fine Gold.*

And this was the Way in which we waited, under the Great Tribulations and Sore Judgments; that we might not only be Convinced, and take up a Rest there, in that we believed the words of Truth, and could Dispute for it; but that we might be Converted, and in the Spirit of our Minds throughly Renewed; *that we might be as Saviours upon Mount* Sion, *and as Workers together in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, to help and strengthen the Weak Brethren and Sisters, and speak a Word in Due Season to the Weary Soul:* which Work was not at all Wearisom to us, though our Hazards and Hardships were great sometimes to get a Hand to the Helpless Ones; yet when once we got but a little hold, and we felt them coming nearer to Truth and us, then our Hearts Rejoyced, and our Souls were right Glad.

And they whose Beauty was hid as with Bullrushes, and smeered as with Mire, then they appeared to be goodly Children: These were Sweet Encouragements unto us, greatly refreshing our Bowels, to behold these Prisoners thus shewing themselves forth, which made us (with many more Faithful Brethren) not to love our lives unto the death; but even for the truly Good Man, dare to dye, when called thereunto.

The Spirit of that blessed Man began so to stir in our Bosoms, that we could even (in a Sense) *a wished our selves*

Accurſed for our Kindred, Acquaintance, and Country-men, that they alſo might feel what we felt; knowing upon what Ground they ſtood, and what Zeal they (as well as we, many of them) had: but the true Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, was wanting; the Vail of *Obſervations* and *Carnal Apprehenſions* being yet over the Heart, which nothing can remove but Chriſt; *who is the Life and Light of Men, and Glory of his People Iſrael.*

There are many Witneſſes yet alive, who can teſtifie to theſe things, and much more then we intend at this time to mention; only ſome few particulars we may hint at, to the end, *That no Travellers towards* Zion *may turn aſide from the Foot-ſteps of the Flocks of the Companions, nor Err from the Right Way, as it was received and walked in at the Beginning.*

O! what Fear and Holy Dread was upon our Spirits, *leſt we ſhould think our own Thoughts*, or *give way in the leaſt to the fleſhly Motions of our own minds*, or *admit any of the Cares for the things of this Life*, or *give way to any inordinate Affection to the neareſt and deareſt Relations, leſt thereby we ſhould be hindred in the day of our Eſpouſals from being Chaſte Virgins unto Chriſt.*

Likewiſe, *What Carefulneſs of our Words! What Watchfulneſs to our Wayes! What Heedfulneſs of our Company! that we might keep our Conſciences clear, that our Lives and Converſations might ſhew unto all men, that we are under the Government of Jeſus, that we might be manifeſt to God's Witneſs in every man's Boſom:* and in theſe things the Lord Bleſſed us.

Again, *How Careful were we, that we might not loſe one tittle of our Teſtimony, by the keeping to the plain Language, that we might not lift up the Proud ſpirit in any, by mincing in that particular.*

And alſo, *How did our Moderation appear unto all men in our Meats, and Drinks, and Apparel, &c?*

And, *How Inwardly Retired did we Walk, fearing to draw out the Minds of any into Unprofitable Diſcourſes; having a principal*

cipal regard unto the Inward Exercise of our minds, lest we should lose our own Conditions; which made us prize Retired Meetings, in which we were sensible of the Teachings of the True Prophet from the False, in our selves, and others? Then we were sensible of the Living Word to take deep root downward, that from thence we might bring forth Fruit upward, to the Praise of God: Desiring ye may walk in these steps.

Time would fail to tell of the *Poverty of Spirit, Humility of Heart, Lowliness of Mind, Brokenness of Soul, Contempt of the World, not only of its Glory and Riches, but of all its Wisdom and Knowledge, counting it Dross and Dung in comparison of the Excellent Knowledge now manifested in us through the Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We cannot pass by that *Godly Fear*, which at that day was in our Hearts, *lest by Discoursing or Reading many Books, we should awaken again the Old Wisdom and Understanding, and again get the Notion of things in the Carnal Comprehension, and thereby lose our Experimental Knowledge of the Inward Work of God in our own particulars:* From which Experience we are careful to speak about the things of God; finding it our Safety and Preservation, to keep to our own Measures; and not to deck our selves with the words only, or other mens Gifts, nor yet to pride our selves with our former Experiences and Knowledge, though God's Jewels, according to the Prophets words.

These things being witnessed in the Beginning, we desire, exhort and advise all, especially those that are Young in the Truth, and newly convinced of the Everlasting Way, and make profession of the same, that they be careful to avoid all those things which the *Godly Fear* caus'd us to avoid at the Beginning; and so much the more, *because our Enemies and Opposers are waiting for all Occasions to asperse the Holy Truth, and the true Professors of it:* In which practice they

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follow the steps of the Enemies of God in former times, who not only watched for Mischief, to make Offenders for a word, but were ready to fall upon the Hindermost and Weakest amongst them, and that when they were but newly Circumcis'd or Convinc'd of the Truth, even while they were yet sore, or in the deep Exercise of their Minds.

Then if they could draw them out to dispute of any thing beyond their own Measure, they will Boast of that, and charge any Advantage (that they have gotten from the Weak, or Newly Convinced) upon the whole Body; and put us, either to deny the unlearned words that were spoken, or them that spake them (though their Intention were right) these men being willingly ignorant of, as well as envious against the Truth, and them that walk therein.

Therefore cast not your Pearls before Swine, lest they turn again, and rent you: So out of our Love to, and Care for the Truth, we desire all such Friends, and Convinced People, *To keep to their own Measures, trusting more in and unto the Simplicity of Christ manifest in themselves, then to any Wisdom, Parts, or Arguments of their own, in the Earthly or Natural Comprehension.*

For we have found by many years Experience, That the true Simplicity, and inward Poverty of Spirit, God hath alwayes had regard unto, beyond all flourishing Expressions & guilded Speeches, that may charm, and take the outward Ear, but never deliver the Prisoner out of the Pit.

Neither hath the Work of God thus far prosper'd by such Weapons of War, or words of Man's Wisdom; but by a secret Vertue, that alwayes attended the truly Poor in Spirit, that did appear what they were only by Grace, and its Edge upon the Conscience; and to this day do all the true Labourers work with the same Tool or Instrument.

And if you that are Newly Convinced would be kept

lively in your Conditions to Godward, your growth must be only, *in walking in the Light, and keeping in the Grace of God*, and then for words, & knowledg they will come fast enough upon you, as God hath Service for you: and then, by so doing, you will both save your selves, and them that hear you; and also, frustrate them that wait for Evil.

From which Grace of God these things are written, and in the same commended to your Consciences, desiring heartily, that in your own Measures of the same you may be preserved amongst the Faithful Witnesses of Jesus, till your Dayes determined come to be accomplished, and you finish your Course with Joy.

This from us (who Labour and Travel in the Work of the Gospel, for the Advancing of the Name of the Lord) your Friends in God's Truth,

London, *the* 15*th of the* 11*th Moneth*, 1672.

John Crooke.
Thomas Green.

THE END.